GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1916
ANSWERED ON:15.12.2003
DECLINE IN ELEPHANT POPULATION
ALE NARENDRA

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken a decision to set up a National Environment Authority and six regional authorities across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the proposed composition of the National Environment Authority and the regional authorities;

(d) the functions proposed to be assigned to them;

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) According to the latest estimates, the population of elephants in the States where Project Elephant is being implemented, is as under:

State	Number
Andhra Pradesh	73
Arunachal Pradesh	1607
Assam	5312
Jharkhand	618
Karnataka	6088
Kerala	5737
Meghalaya	1840
Nagaland	147
Orissa	1827
Tamil Nadu	2971
Uttaranchal	1507
West Bengal	327

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) Project Elephant is being implemented in the country with a view to protecting elephants and improving their habitats. Various measures undertaken for this purpose are as under:

(i) Government has identified 26 Elephant Reserves in the country with a view to provide systematic and focussed management of viable elephant ranges. Of these, 23 Elephant Reserves have since been notified by the State Governments.

(ii) Intensive patrolling is done by the forest staff in sensitive areas. Assistance from the Police is also taken as and when required.

(iii) The C.B.I. has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protectio) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.

(iv) The Government through Ministry of Home Affairs has written to all State Governments to lend a helping hand to the field formations of the Forest Departments to curb poaching and illegal trade in wildlife.

(v) QA Special Co-ordination andEnforcement Committee, comprising representatives from various enforcement agencies of Government has been set up under the Chairmanship of Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, for overseeing the measures taken to curb poaching and illegal trade in wildlife. Similar co-ordination committees comprising representatives of various enforcement agencies at the state level have also been set up.

(vi) The Forest Departments of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have formed a regional co-ordination committee for joint action against inter-State gangs of poachers.

(vii) Import and export of ivory have been banned.

(viii) India is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) which prohibits international trade in ivory and other elephant products.

(ix) For controlling trans-border trade in elephant parts and products, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with Nepal.